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Council was in a fair way of being "bled" to death, when Thomas Wentworth by a vigorous reassertion of its power brought the whole matter into the arena of political controversy. This is a most revealing chapter, which by weight of evidence carries the conviction that the court composed of the king's councillors in the North was on the whole assiduous and successful in the performance of its task; that compared with other courts it was neither severe, oppressive, nor corrupt; and that its fall, in depriving the country of a needed local court, was nothing less than a catastrophe.

The merits of the work as a product of research, bringing into view a new field of local and national history, need no further demonstration. In spite of its correctness as a whole, however, there are many minor errors that have, from lack of sufficient criticism, been allowed to stand. Misprints in names and numerals, as many as six on p. 482, are excessively frequent. Statute 6 Rich. II. (p. 51 n.) should be 16 Rich. II. There are disconcerting allusions to the "Council of State" and to "prerogative courts", which are terms of no constitutional validity, while statements concerning the Court of Chancery (pp. 66, 450) are incorrect as they stand. As a matter of historical synthesis the reviewer feels that descriptive material is regarded too much as accessory to a legal treatise, instead of being made a vital part of the theme. The search for new material has not been abundantly rewarded, but several documents of value have been printed in the appendixes.

JAMES F. BALDWIN.

The Nicholas Papers: Correspondence of Sir Edward Nicholas, Secretary of State. Edited for the Royal Historical Society by Sir GEORGE F. WARNER, D.Litt., F.B.A. Volume IV., 1657-1660. [Camden, third series, vol. XXXI.] (London: the Society. 1920. Pp. xxix, 283.)

THIS volume completes the publication of the correspondence of Sir Edward Nicholas. Some of the letters fall within each of the years 1657-1660, but they are very unevenly distributed. More than half are within the period March, 1659-March, 1660. This period is not only the most thoroughly covered; its letters are also of the greatest interest and importance. Nicholas was at the time living in Bruges and receiving frequent reports from royalist agents in England. City, army, Parliament, all were being watched by them for any opening favorable to the king. As would be expected, the writers tell of the anarchy and confusion in England after the death of Oliver, and of the inability of Richard to maintain his position. They tell something of royalist plots and plans encouraged by those conditions. But greater chaos was not the chief hope of the royalists; rather the establishment of an orderly government, the return to power of the more moderate men. And so we find these correspondents of Nicholas keeping a close watch on the parliaments that sat during this

critical year, "Dick's Parliament" (p. 173), the Rump, the restored Long Parliament. There is even something on the elections to the Convention Parliament. The letters are brief, there is more of comment than of information; they are nevertheless a real contribution to the history of Parliament.

To the student of Parliament perhaps the most interesting of the letters is that of "Mr. Miles", dated May 9, 1659, which tells of the efforts of the leading Presbyterians of the Long Parliament to regain their seats in the Rump. Part of the letter bears quoting because of the information it adds to Prynne's narrative (*Old Parliamentary History*, XXI. 384-386). To the list of names given there, it adds those of Sir William Waller and Richard Browne, indicating clearly that they were distinct from Prynne's group. They "challenged their right for themselves". But there came also "a number more considerable of that packe [Prynne, etc., who had presented themselves on the 7th] that would usurpe the howse to themselves, and indeede they were the chiefe assertors of the old cause and first interrupted by Oliver's army. Of this party was Mr. William Perpoint, whoe never offered to sitt in the howse (since Prides forcible exemsion) till this tyme" (p. 134). This not only adds three important names to the list but helps to fill in a serious gap in our knowledge of Pierrepoint. Even more valuable is this in the light of the following from a letter of March 9, 1660: "Mr. Perpoint met Monke on his journey and had a whole days discourse in their coach together . . . Monke relyes much on him" (p. 194). We are no longer surprised to find Pierrepoint heading the list of the new Council of State (*C. J.*, VII. 849).

Though the publication of the correspondence of Sir Edward Nicholas has extended over so long a period of time (1886-1920), the four volumes are similar in plan and treatment. That this is true of the text is a matter for regret. One is sorry to find the same adherence to the old form of letters. The interchanged use of *u* and *v*, *i* and *j*, might be pardoned, but not *y^e* as an abbreviation of *the*. Yet even *y^e* might be forgiven, as a concession to antiquarianism, if the editor did not at the same time follow modern usage by introducing quotation-marks, the interrogation-point, and the apostrophe to mark the possessive case. But it is a satisfaction to find this last volume following the plan of the others as regards their very helpful notes and index.

FRANCES HELEN RELF.

Matthew Prior: a Study of his Public Career and Correspondence.

By L. G. WICKHAM LEGG, Fellow and Tutor of New College, Oxford. (Cambridge: University Press. 1921. Pp. x, 348. 22s. 6d.)

PRIOR started life as a waiting boy in a London tavern. He rose rapidly in the world and soon became the companion of poets, politicians,